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OUR NATION.

AN ADDRESS

BEFORE THE

ARCHÆAN UNION OF BELOIT COLLEGE.

Delivered February 28, 1862.

BY

PROF. J. EMERSON.

BELOIT, WIS.:
JOURNAL AND COURIER PRINT.
1862.

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19, 1862,
CORRESPONDENCE.

BELOIT COLLEGE, March 3d, 1862.

PROF. J. EMERSON:—

Dear Sir:—It is with gratification that we transmit to you a copy of a Resolution of the Archaean Union, adopted at a special meeting held this evening, expressing their estimation of your Address, delivered on the evening of the 28th of February, and request a copy of it for publication; hoping it will meet your pleasure to comply with the request.

Resolved, That we regard the Address delivered by Professor Emerson before this Society, on Friday evening, February 28th, as an impartial exposition of our external and internal, political and social relations; an Address not only National, but Universal; and considering it the result of an unbounded love and reverence for "Our Nation," we feel greatly indebted to him for the honor of its delivery before the Society. Believing that its publication would gratify both those who heard it and many who did not, we respectfully request a copy of it for this purpose."

Yours, with much respect,

HENRY S. OSBORNE,
THOMAS S. MCCLELLAND,
SAM'L D. HASTINGS, JR.,
Committee.

BELOIT COLLEGE, March 4th, 1862.

GENTLEMEN:—

Your polite note, requesting, in behalf of the Archaean Union, a copy of the lecture of Friday evening, is before me.

The aim of the Address was to lay before the members of the Society and of the community, certain principles which seemed to me important at the present crisis, when our people are rapidly coming to conclusions which will be of lasting influence upon the future of our country and of the world. I am gratified that those principles have been favorably received by the young men to whom they were presented, and if, in the judgment of the Society, the publication of the Address would further promote them, it is at their service.

Very truly yours,

J. EMERSON.

*Messrs. Osborne, McClelland and Hastings,
Committee Archaean Union.*

OUR NATION.

OUR NATION ! And what is a nation ? We think of a nation as composed of people united under one government ; and yet we do not call the English, the Irish, the Hottentots, and the Hindoos, one nation, though they are under one government ; and we do call the Germans one, though under many governments. The ancient Greeks were one nation in many states ; and the old Roman Empire comprised many nations under one command. What, then, is the unity of a nation ? Locality and language and kindred blood have much to do with it. Yet the master and the slave, on one plantation, are not of one nation. The Jews, scattered through all lands and speaking all languages, are yet one nation. In our own land, English and Irish, who never could coalesce across the sea, and Germans and Italians, rally side by side with native Americans under the Stars and Stripes, and all look up to that glorious banner as their own—their own as no other banner ever had been or could be ; while native Americans, even those who a little while ago were joining in the cry of “America for the Americans,” have shown, by their treason, that they never had the moral right to call that banner theirs.

“America for the Americans !” Most certainly ! The word comes back to us purified in this burning atmosphere of war. “America for the Americans !” So mote it be ! So shall it be ! But who is the American ? Shall we recognize him by his Anglo-Saxon blood and pedigree ? Or is that man an American, in whose heart is the love of those principles of liberty and law, which are the soul of the American life ? Is not every man, of whatsoever race or language, who accepts in his heart our Declaration of Independence, our countryman and our brother ? and is not whosoever rejects it an alien or a traitor ? So I think we must define the term nation, as applied to us. The unity of our nation is a *unity of sympathy*.

There are those who seem to think that a nation is a kind of partnership, entered into by mutual consent, and dissolvable at the pleasure of any party, so that any body of men, or any spoiled child, might vote itself a nation. Is it so ? Is a nationality a thing of human creation, or is it a work of God ?

Did not He, that made the worlds, “make of one blood all nations

of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth, and determine the times before appointed, and the bounds of their habitation; that they might seek after the Lord, if haply they might find him, though he be not far from every one of us?"

There you have the key of history. The nations, like the families of men, are centers of sympathy, by which God is teaching our Ishmaelitic nature to live in kindness and in law, and to rise to enough of purity of heart, and symmetry and development of mind, to seek for and to recognize and to unite itself to that Fatherly authority,—that Brotherly love and Spiritual communion of the one God, which is always "not far from every one of us," and which is ever yearning to receive us into the fellowship of that kingdom of God, which itself shall be the realization of the ideal of a nation.

A nation, then, is not the product of a whim or of a day; nor is it to be blotted out by a battle, or even by years of oppression. This is true even of those comparatively minor nations, which differ from those about them, only as dialects of the same language differ. The Poles, the Magyars, the Irish, the Italians, hold their own national sympathies unconquerable, even in bondage.

But, if I mistake not, ours is a nation in a different sense from that in which the Poles or the French are nations. For all shall find these particular nationalities grouping in larger aggregates or systems of nations, like that Christendom which hurled itself upon the Moslem in the Crusades. A true chart of the history of the world should present these grand national wholes. Certain bounds of national habitation have remained or re-established themselves with wonderful persistence. No changes of dynasty, or even of faith, could efface them. The Tigris, the Hellespont, and the Adriatic, have formed dividing lines, beyond which it seemed that nations could not mingle.

But, looking upon the work of the World-builder, we should see Him not only letting in the seas to separate Europe from Africa and from Asia, but also spreading out a vast ocean between all that continent and another, which for thousands of years was to be hidden from the Old World. Every night, while those old nations were sleeping, the sun visited it, and found it still in native wildness, waiting "the time before appointed," when its chosen people should come and erect there a nation worth the waiting.

So patiently worketh He, at whose least word a universe would spring into instant being, or would pass away and be no more. He is reducing a rebellion. He is restoring the kingdom of God, in a world disorganized by treason. His heart is in the work. There is no treason in Him, nor loitering, nor indecision. He presses on the war of restoration with all His skill, and all His energy, and all His resources. And yet four thousand years of anarchy and wretchedness passed away before He sent His Son to speak, so that men could understand it, that word of deliverance, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which is the only foundation of true society among men. And even He came not with hosts of victor angels to strike off every bond, and to cast men with their alienated hearts into a chaotic lib-

city, equality and malignity. So perhaps Michael would have done, but not so the All-wise. He knew His world too well, and the race He meant to save. And so He spoke on earth that quiet word, and wrote it indelibly with His blood, and ascended up on high, "Leading captivity captive," though there was not a slave the less on earth. But the word of deliverance was spoken and printed by the Spirit upon the hearts of men, and it was sure of its fulfillment. It was a new law among men. All old constitutions were founded not on equality, but on prerogative; not on rights of man, but on rights of masters. We talk of the old republics. In Athens and Attica were 100,000 freemen and 400,000 slaves. South Carolina is a free state in comparison. But, the word of freedom once spoken, He, who seeth the end from the beginning, was content to cherish His work in its long fulfillment. It was nearly 1500 years more before He deemed it time to conduct the ship of Columbus across the ocean, and to reveal the habitation which he had prepared for the first of earth's nations.

I say the *first*; for, in an important sense, we may say that there never was a real nation on earth until the declaration of American independence. Because, until then, the true fundamental principle of national life was never made the forming and creative principle of a people's life.

"By the *word* of God the heavens were of old, and the earth standing out of the water and in the water." By *words*, in an intelligent universe, is every thing made that ever was made. Words nerve and words corrupt the soul. "The word of Caesar might have stood against the world," because in Caesar's word there was vigor enough to inspire an army, which could conquer the world. A few words expressing potent ideas, like God, country, duty, mercy, home, liberty, law, &c., make up a whole system of watchwords by which the entire order of human life is going forward to its future hopes.

So the word, "*Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself*," went sinking silently down into the minds of men for centuries. And, all the while, the whole world was organized upon the idea that men are made to be masters and slaves, and to look up one to another, and not to look up every man frankly into the face of God, as He looketh down upon us with a human countenance in Christ, our prophet, priest and king. England has more liberty than any other old land; and yet whatever is done in that government is done "in the gracious pleasure of her majesty," and the people are called subjects, not citizens. There still stands the form of the idol, of that image in which all royalties and all oligarchies have their place, as part of the political idolatry, which must perish before a really genuine nation can be in any land. It is most true that in England, and in all the states which have grown out of the old Roman Empire, the principle of human rights spoken by Christ has in a great degree disorganized the monarchical principle, so that although the form of the old master-ship continues, yet it is easy to see that the iron is mingled with clay,—such clay as it has been standing upon and despising, and that the whole is ready to fall and to crumble.

Yet the Director of Events does not hasten its fall. For the world has need of it yet. The nations that are to be when the world shall need kings no more, will forever owe a debt to Cyrus and to Alexander, to Cæsar and to Alfred, to lion-hearted Richard and to Queen Elizabeth, and to Napoleon. A great blessing is a true king to a people that needs a king; and every people does need a king which has not learned to look up, with an intelligent mind as well as with a reverent and obedient heart, to the "King Eternal."

By that law of Christ, "Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," and by that question, "Who is my neighbor?" was the seed of our nation sown 1800 years ago. That seed was committed to the conscience of man. It passed into Europe, where liberty had been an old and mighty, though a somewhat unmeaning name, and it gave it power and significance. It melted away slavery, and is melting monarchy. It took deep root in the strong manhood of northern Europe, especially in the races whose enterprise brought them to the extreme point of European land and of European progress in England. I shall not pause to eulogize the Anglo-Saxons. God has made them great in these ages, for great purposes; and they are sufficiently aware of their greatness. And when we remember the Assyrians, Persians, Egyptians, Phœnicians, Greeks, Romans, Spaniards, we may be reminded that it is wisdom for a leading race to be not high-minded, but to fear, and to do its work well in its day. But we may remember, thankfully, how well that seed of hope was cherished in the English nation, taking root in old Saxon times, buried under the Norman bondage as under the winter snow, springing up in Magna Charta, slowly developed until it came to maturity in the Puritans, when it was, by a most propitious severity, reaped and threshed, and cast across the seas, to become, upon a continent which had been waiting for it since time began, the right seed for the first of the nations. And here the nation was in being, and was maturing its strength and developing its principles for 150 years before 1776.

Nor let us, if we claim to be more truly and fully a nation than any before, ever forget that it was only through the long labors of those old nations that our nation became possible. Especially, as we would "that our days may be long upon the land which the Lord our God giveth us," let us always honor with filial affection that land from which our nation sprung,—our mother England. God be thanked that we may call her mother. For is she not the glory of the kingdoms, the choicest and most perfect fruit which the civilization of the Old World, through its thousands of years of labor, has borne, or, upon that soil, could bear? There she stands, aloof from the Old World, and leaning toward the new. For a thousand years she has been gathering, and is gathering to-day with a broader sweep than ever, the moral riches of all old lands and times; and for centuries she has been pouring them, and is pouring them to-day with more lavish hand than ever, into the lap of her daughter. Whatsoever is thought or said or done in England worth the hearing, is heard by more Americans than Englishmen. In the most distant seas, and in lands

that but yesterday were barbarous and cannibal, our commerce is sheltered by her law, and our travelers and our missionaries are protected by her consuls or aided by the generous benevolence of her sons. In a mutual intercourse, which reaches to every harbor and almost to every inland village, not only of the two lands, but of the whole earth, it would be very strange if no difficulties arose between the two nations. It is very strange that they are so few. When England was engaged in her terrible conflict with the first Napoleon, her people could hardly be pleased to see the daughter-land finding an occasion to enter the quarrel against the mother; and when Ireland threatened rebellion, we may remember that the son of the President of the United States was ostentatious in public demonstrations of sympathy. At a time when all the mind of this nation is absorbed in that earnest tension of soul which is crushing this rebellion, it is not strange that we should differ upon some great and grave points of public law and right, which might divide honest and deep read men. And we Americans are very ready to judge all such matters. There are very few of us who, if angels were to be judged, would have any scruple as to our own qualifications to sit upon the bench; we would only raise the question whether we could get the appointment. Not that I find any fault with this universal and infinite self-reliance of our countrymen. I glory in it. It is the sanguine heart of youth, which feels itself equal to all things. And so it is. There is more truth and victory in our wildest hopes than in our wariest fears. And because I see our nation ready to think, ready to speak, ready to act upon any matter and in anything, I know that there is a great future before us. So let us go on, assuming and exercising our prerogative to think and to judge,—each individual man of us with that own mind of his, which God gave him to be a man with,—upon every question, especially upon every great question, which our times present. Just so shall we become a great nation, by virtue of the individual greatness of millions of minds, all trained to act earnestly, intelligently and independently, upon great questions and great thoughts. A nation so made of thinking and speaking minds must have a voice like the sea; and as it thinks aloud, the alternatives which it presents to itself, its tides of feeling and of reason, necessarily roll and roar as they pass to and fro across its bosom. But the great swellings of the ocean are not lawless any more than the agitations of a pool. The ocean bears the fleets of the world upon his bosom as safely as the little brook floats a child's toy-boat. And so the hopes of mankind may be as safe upon the free thought of a great people, as the interests of a kingdom with a house of peers. Has there been, since there was a nation, a sublimer sight, than when, in the late great crisis of our relations with England, there came in from all quarters of our country to our rulers, that united voice, not tremulous with passion or with fear, "*Do that which is right!*" And greatly was it done. And that tide of feeling was nobly answered by the spirit which, at the same moment, was rising across the water against the wild cry of war that rang through Eng-

land at the supposed aggression of America upon Britain, the deepest protest which came up to the government from every religious body in the land, and from all the conscience of the people. "*Let us have arbitration, and no war of passion with our brethren in their day of trial.*" That was a voice not unworthy of our mother. Such a voice has never failed to come over the sea to us. And it is the true voice of the English soul. We ought not to wonder that some Englishmen should be jealous of our democratic institutions; for we have felt and seen how our own democracy inclines us to ill-will toward monarchies. Nor should we think it strange that some Englishmen should be jealous of our growth as a nation. Rather ought we to admire that generosity which, in other Englishmen, and in those who represent the England that is to be, rejoices in our increase. We must own that they have the advantage over us in magnanimity. The generosity with which they, in large loyalty to mankind and to truth, can rejoice in our increase, challenges us to unlearn that exclusive national pride, which appropriates our blessings as our own, and forgets that we have them in trust for mankind. But we will emulate them. Nor, again, is it strange that the same class of British merchantmen, who for twenty-five years withstood the abolition of the slave-trade, should now feel the power of those new ropes of cotton, which have been found strong enough to bind our own Samson.

Yet, behind jealousy and pride and selfishness, there is a live conscience in the British people, and that conscience has been and is with us, so far as we are true to ourselves. Conscience in man is always in the minority, for the simple reason that it is always in advance. But it is always deathless and invincible and victorious. It leads the forlorn hope, and around it there gather none but the heroes. They who speak the true heart of England are the few men, but the great. So in the days of our struggle for independence, the great voice of Chatham was raised in our behalf, and he was sustained by those men in the House of Commons whose names have become historical. Chatham was in a poor minority in that House of Peers; for they were the peers of George the Third, king of England, and he was the peer of George Washington, king of men. In the midnight of our revolution, Edmund Burke, in behalf of those who acted with him in Parliament, wrote thus to the people of America:

"We view the establishment of the English colonies on principles of liberty, as that which is to render this kingdom venerable to future ages. In comparison of this, we regard all the victories and conquests of our warlike ancestors, or of our own times, as barbarous, vulgar distinctions, in which many nations, whom we look upon with little respect or value, have equalled, if not far exceeded us. This is the peculiar and appropriated glory of England. Those *who have and who hold* to that foundation of common liberty, whether on this or on your side of the ocean, we consider as the true, and the only true Englishmen. Those who depart from it, whether there or here, are

attainted, corrupted in blood, and wholly fallen from their original rank and value."

That was the spirit of the men who were fighting in the British Parliament a war not less severe than our fathers fought upon their own soil. And it is the spirit of the men, who, like Cobden and Bright, represent the present masses, the future government, and the perpetual conscience of England.

Chatham and Burke did not think that in being true to America they were false to England. As we have seen, in the view of these great hearts, England was the name, not so much of certain square miles of soil, but of certain principles of national life; and the man who accepted those principles, wheresoever he lived, was their countryman. Shall we accept their fellow-citizenship, and their large idea of nationality, and take the hand they stretch across the seas, and say, "Yes! we are Englishmen, and you are Americans,—one nation by the tie of that foundation of common liberty," which was English before it was American?" of which, indeed, as an English idea, America was born. The coming of the Pilgrims across the sea was only a part of that *English* movement for liberty which struggled with Cromwell and triumphed with William and Mary. I am accustomed to recur, with a kind of religious wonder, to that Charter which King James gave while the Pilgrims were upon the sea in the Mayflower. By that charter he gave the land between the 40th and the 48th degrees of latitude from the Atlantic to the South Sea, and he called it *New England*. Did he speak that of himself? or being, "*by the grace of God, king,*" did he prophesy that that belt of country was "determined," by the King of kings, for the habitation of a people who should take the principles of old English liberty, and develop them in a free nation, whose greatness and whose purity should deliver not that nation only, but old England also, and, in their time, all the nations of the earth?

Let us remember, then, that we have these principles of liberty, and this rising national greatness, not of ourselves, but that they are the legacy of all the nations that have struggled, and of all the martyrs that have died. They are part of the gifts which the dying Son of Man received for men. And they are ours, not for ourselves, but for all mankind.

In our Declaration of Independence was Christ's golden rule first proclaimed to the world, as a law of national life. It was a beacon of hope for all mankind, and all nations are flowing unto it.

They come because they are attracted by its principles; because that principle of its charter calls the allegiance of their hearts. And so they come as *coming home*. For no nation until this has been in its principles and in its form a home for man, as such. Of course they come with many crude or visionary ideas as to what a land of liberty may be. But they come to be citizens of the land of liberty, and will be apt scholars in the conditions of liberty. Is it not right that they should come? For do we not owe our liberty to their nations as well as to our English fathers and to ourselves? And is not

that sympathy, which brings them here, the true and sufficient certificate of their birthright to citizenship in the nation of the free? And if more title were needed, is it too much to say that our country owes its success in the present struggle to the true and prompt loyalty of citizens of foreign birth? They first rallied in force around the standard of the Union in the border States, and to them, more than to the native population, must we look for loyalty in the rebel States.

Thus, our country presents the spectacle of a nation forming about a principle—the principle of the equal rights of man. Whoever upon our soil is true to that principle, is a true American. Whoever upon our soil is not true to that principle, is not a true American. But still, so long as he does no act of treason, the nation does not cast him out. It lets him live within its great heart, and cherishes him within its warmth and its wealth. Its great throbbings go forth for him, securely trusting that, if there be the seed of manhood in him, it shall yet make a man of him; and if there be not,—if he be utterly an apostate, so that he cannot live under and in the Declaration of Independence, and feel it working, like the advancing sun of spring its steady and sure victory, it lets him find it out for himself, and lets him choose his time to secede and to grapple with the law of God and the conscience of mankind.

“Eternal vigilance,” says Jefferson, “is the price of liberty.” If eternal vigilance means eternal suspicion, we must think that the maxim is a false and fatal one. Its great author would have been a greater and a better man if he had known how to co-operate in generous confidence with such men as Washington and Hamilton and Jay and the elder Adams. If man cannot have confidence in man, there can be no such thing as free government. Suspicion in the state, like jealousy in the house, is bondage. The rattlesnake, or the dripping sword, is not the emblem, nor is “*Sic semper tyrannis*” the motto for a truly free commonwealth; but rather, “*Euse petit placidam sub libertate quietem*,” or the peaceful vine with the legend, “*Qui transtulit sustinet*.” Liberty is, in theory and in practice, inseparable from that *charity*, which “believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.” And if it is not, and is not to be, safe in this world to believe and hope and endure thoroughly, then the rule of charity is a rule of folly, and the “perfect law of liberty” is forever a vain hope. If we can have liberty at all, it must be upon the basis of mutual confidence, and mutual confidence rests upon truth and good will. An over-confidence may expose liberty to some attacks from abroad, and to some treason within, but a mutual suspicion is in itself death in the heart.

So there was something great in that night, which has risen so terrible, yet so collected, to vindicate the law of our nation, when treason had risen in such form that it could no longer be mistaken. Yet, is there any greatness in it greater than the light which it makes to shine through that darkness, which had preceded it, when for those days and months, which were years and ages, the nation kept on bearing and forbearing? Knowing the deep truth of its

own heart, it could not and would not believe that sons, who had shared the tender love of such a mother, could be preparing a dagger for that mother's heart. Their forbearance was not so disloyal as it might seem, for in it lay not only the deep love which that mother had taught them, but also a sure confidence that the mother, having her home in hearts like theirs, was immortal and invulnerable. And when, at the stroke, they rose, the rising was as majestic as the waiting. It was, if I know the heart of this people, not in passion, but in truth. It is a great saying of one whose greatness has been brought out by this struggle, and to whom, as much as to any other living man, we owe its success, that "*this is a war of duty.*"

Where else shall we find a people so mighty, and yet so self-commanding,—so full of truth unconquerable, and yet so balanced by good will undying? It seems like the shadow of that love of Heaven which bends, age after age, over this poor rebel Earth of ours, never giving over the hope that even such a world could yet be saved,—the love of Him, who would not strike for vengeance until He had died to save.

And is the comparison a profane one? For is not our nation a part of the unfolding of that great plan of salvation—of the re-organization of mankind under His own royal law,—the law of liberty?

Just in that power to command self, as well as to conquer enemies, lies the assurance of the ability of our people to be a free people. The issue turns almost simply on our ability to be true to the principles of our national life. The doctrine that men are made to be free and equal, created our nation, and has made us great. Such a doctrine has a double application. There is in it a duty as well as a privilege. It was not so much for us to maintain our own rights under it in our first Revolution, when we were small, as it is for us to maintain our truth in it, now that we are grown great. We have been put to the test in the case of negro slavery, and because the heart of this people would not approve of such a system, but fixed its frown, more mighty than any law, upon it continually, and more and more, this present war is upon us. It will be, in its immediate or ultimate results, our deliverance from that danger of falling from the principle of our life. And we may trust that, in the questions which are to arise out of the war, the just and generous truth of the nation will find its safe and glorious way, remembering those noble parting words of the father of our country: "It will be worthy of a free, enlightened, and, at no distant period, a great nation, to give to mankind the magnanimous but too novel example of a people always guided by an exalted justice and benevolence."

In point of material greatness, I think we have not fallen behind the anticipations of Washington. You will not find upon the earth's surface another land so fit for the rich and ample home of a great nation as ours, nor another population so full of the elements of national greatness as this which is filling this great land, nor another principle which can make a true living nation except that which lives

in us. If we can hold our faith in God, and our faith in man, and our own truth of heart, we are safe.

The principle of our nation does not allow us to have subjects, so that an Empire, like that of Britain, we cannot have. Yet, in our own way, we have empire, too. "Britain rules the seas," they used to say; and yet, do you know that the commercial marine of these United States is to-day greater than that of Britain herself, while the fleets of all other nations together would not equal half the tonnage of either branch of the great Anglo-Saxon power. But this is not our Empire. Britain holds millions of barbarians under the fear of her power. America holds millions of enlightened men, in every civilized country, bound to her by a true and deep allegiance to the principle of American liberty. Lafayette, and Steuben, and Kosciuszko, and Chatham, were not solitary specimens of their kind; nor is the race extinct. Go to Washington, and you shall find among the chief ornaments of our nation the legacy of James Smithson, a stranger. Another, who, like Smithson, never set foot upon our soil, but whose love for our nation led him to devote his life to our history, said: "As Hannibal was taught by his father to hate the Romans, so was I trained by mine to love the Americans." So are many fathers in the Old World training their sons. Where was ever seen before such a spectacle of empire,—that one nation, not by any power of arms, not by any craft of policy, but by the magnetism of simple truth, should draw to itself the attachment of whatsoever is wise and true throughout the world! Nor is this true of individuals only. Whole peoples love America with an affection which their own governments do not conciliate. So Germany, and Ireland, and Italy, and Poland, have been, and are ours. And other peoples cherish our name beside our own. So in England, it was confessed that the joy with which some men viewed our civil strife, was because they were jealous of the admiration of Englishmen for America. Yet we ought not to think, as we are apt to do, that all kings and nobles hate us. For a king is a man—and may be a true man; and the generous kindness for us which inspired the last public act of Prince Albert of England, and the hearty sympathy of the Russian Czar for us as a people, struggling like himself for the emancipation of slaves, ought to satisfy us that the same human heart beats in the monarch as in the subject or citizen, and that if we be true to man, mankind will be true to us. If the ordeal through which we are passing shall deliver us from that system which has been our reproach, without leaving us filled with internal heart-burnings and hate, so that we shall stand as a truly free and self-governing people, will not the acceptance of American principles, the true empire of America, be as broad and enduring as the name of Washington—as broad as the mind, and lasting as the memory of man?

Our nation, then, is not of ourselves or to ourselves. It is an attempt of mankind to realize a vision of liberty which has been floating in the mind of man since the fall. The attempt is in its charac-

ter visionary; and the world has long ago learned that it is foolish to be chasing visions. And yet mankind never would give it up. They have always insisted upon hoping that the vision would yet come true, and though it tarries long, they wait for it. They will chase the rainbow. They will believe that liberty and law shall yet be one upon the earth. Even to the very last days the young men will continue to see that vision, and the old men will dream that dream. And dreams are true. They work their own fulfillment. This vision of liberty has been building its fabrics from age to age, and as they have seemed to fall, they have risen again. America itself is such a fabric; and if it should pass away, and man wake to disappointment again, his mind will renew the same dream, until it shall be true. But it hopes that this time it will not be mocked. Believing in the word of God, believing in the hope of glorious liberty, written by God in the mind of man,—that hope which has sustained a groaning creation in all its long bondage,—it cannot give up the looking for a free state. And if such a hope is ever to be fulfilled, when and where and how should it ever be, if not here, and in the development of this republic? Is there another continent to be discovered? Is there another stock from which to constitute the nation of the free, if they who have been called from all the wisest and best nations of men shall fail? Is there another principle more pure and true than that of the equal rights of men under the law of God? All these seem to be grounds of hope, not only such as never were before, but such as never can be again. Accordingly, we have often heard the remark that this is the last hope of liberty upon earth. It is a saying of good omen. If it be so—if this is the last hope of liberty—then it is a sure hope. For the hopes of man and the promises of God are not going to fail of their fulfillment.

They must not die! they cannot die! Mankind shall not have it to say, that it reposed its hopes in our nation and was disappointed. But how shall we succeed? what are the dangers? From abroad, we may say—none; the sympathy and the support of the world are with us, if we are true to it; and we have already strength enough to maintain our own right in the world. And what are our dangers from within? We are in the habit of providing defenses and safeguards and anchors, as if all we had to do was to save as much as we might of what we already have. The fact is, that we are trying to realize a vision; and we must be visionaries, and must build up, and build with the only true living and lasting material, and that is, with "such stuff as dreams are made of." For it is a cloud-land, "the kingdom of heaven," which we are building up; and we cannot build that with the materials or by the rules of this world. The Jerusalem which is free, and the mother of us all, is not founded on or built of this world's granite. It is from above, and must be built of living stones. We need positive elements. And first among them we may name *Hope*.

As our nation is the child of the hopes of mankind so it is only by being full of those hopes in their most azure hues that we can

lead on to their fulfillment. Do not be afraid to hope. No rose-tint that man ever saw yet in the western sky, and no Aurora in the north, has been equal to the loving brightness with which the whole arch of heaven is yet to smile upon a cleansed earth. And in no small degree shall our nation and our world be saved by that very hope.

And another element of success will be *Faith*.

Faith in God, by whose own plan and power all these things are going forward in which we are permitted to be instruments, and whose heart is in them. Faith in man, who is showing us so abundantly that his heart is with us, so far and so long as we are true to the cause of man. It seems a hazardous reliance; and yet, as we have seen, here all the question turns. If man cannot trust in man, there cannot be free government, there cannot be society,—we would not care to have life. And it is a safe trust. Individual men may be dishonest. Very few men are like Washington; and yet, in this nation, or in any other nation, or in mankind as a whole, the great public heart is an honest heart, and it will exact honesty of its agents. Dishonesty is the child of suspicion. Confide in man, and, as a rule, man is yours. "This is the victory which overcometh the world, even our faith."

We must have faith in man, and faith in man's destiny. That faith, clear and unwavering, is the only condition of success. To doubt, or to look back, is to fail. So the poetry of man (which is his second sight, looking into real truth,) has always been conscious. You know the fable of Orpheus, the old minstrel, who went to the dusky realm of death to recover his loved and lost Eurydice. His song charmed dark Pluto and Proserpina, and they granted that she should follow him to the light of day, provided that the minstrel should not look back. But the poet lost his faith. He looked, and saw the form that he loved flee back despairing into the darkness. Can you read the fable? *Eurydice* is *Eurcia dike*—that *wide justice*, which is loved and lost to man, and *Orpheus* is man, the orphan, bereft of that truth, which was the blessedness of his life. But he has left to him the poetry of his nature, which can still lament the loss, and which still has power to restore the lost, provided that poetry can so ravish our souls that we shall go right on, singing that song of truth, which is in unison with the song of the just, looking from the darkness and toward the light, until we come fully into the light; and then, when we come to be children of the light, the form we love will be by our side, the companion of our truth and of our bliss forever. But while we are yet in the darkness it cannot be ours. If we turn back the vision fades; we are still unjust citizens of an unjust world.

Again, we must have *Charity*; a generous heart toward every nation and toward every man. Our strength as a nation does not lie in the tenacity with which we can cling to every foot of soil, or to our own interpretation of every accidental point of controversy; but it lies in the confidence of mankind in our fidelity to man. If

we will stop to think of it, we shall see that our foreign power is totally different from that of any other people. It is a moral power. All other governments have appealed to patriotism; that is, an attachment to their own soil, and an alienation from every other; that is, "thou shalt love thy neighbor and hate thy enemy." We rest upon the broad basis of humanity. We love our country, not only as our own, but as the sanctuary of the rights and hopes of man; and as such a sanctuary, all mankind will love it, if we will let them. One clear lesson of this winter's collision with England was this, that the English people could not be excited to war with us, except by the impression that we wished war with them. When they saw that we desired peace and truth they grasped the olive branch with joy. We do not need, and cannot afford, like the old governments of force, to depend upon the character of the bully. We are great enough to have the right to set to the world the novel example of a nation which, in its public relations, can practice the principles of Christianity and humanity. The hearty good will of the masses of the English people is worth more to us—and through us to man—than a victorious war with the British monarchy. Let all the world see that we honor and love man as man, and that we desire the good of every nation as a nation; that we have not, as surely we need not have, any jealousy of any,—and then, if there were upon the earth a government inclined to war with us, there would be not a people that would suffer its government to lead them into such a war. For a free nation the best policy for security at home is a policy of peace. For war itself is despotism. I know that a great bard has written:

"Oh Freedom! thou art not, as poets dream,
A fair young girl, with light and delicate limbs,
And wavy tresses gushing from the cap
With which the Roman master crowned his slave
When he took off the gyves. A bearded man,
Arm'd to the teeth, art thou."

"A bearded man," indeed! And was it for love of a bearded man that man has been struggling and sighing ever since his fall? No! the dream of poets is the dream of man. It is of "the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty," whose virtue, stern enough to repel all violence, is only the dignity of a loveliness attractive enough to win and rule and bless all humanity.

"Peace on earth, good will toward man," angels sang, when the Deliverer was born; and "Peace on earth, good will to man," must be the motto of the nation that is to lead the world's deliverance.

How to be true to our principles at home, is now, as it always has been and always will be, the great and difficult problem. How to do justice to that race which is lifting to us that appeal, "Am I not a man and a brother?" in all the associations in which God has placed us to work out this experiment of a free government, is a question which has engaged the earnest study of the wisest, and the earnest

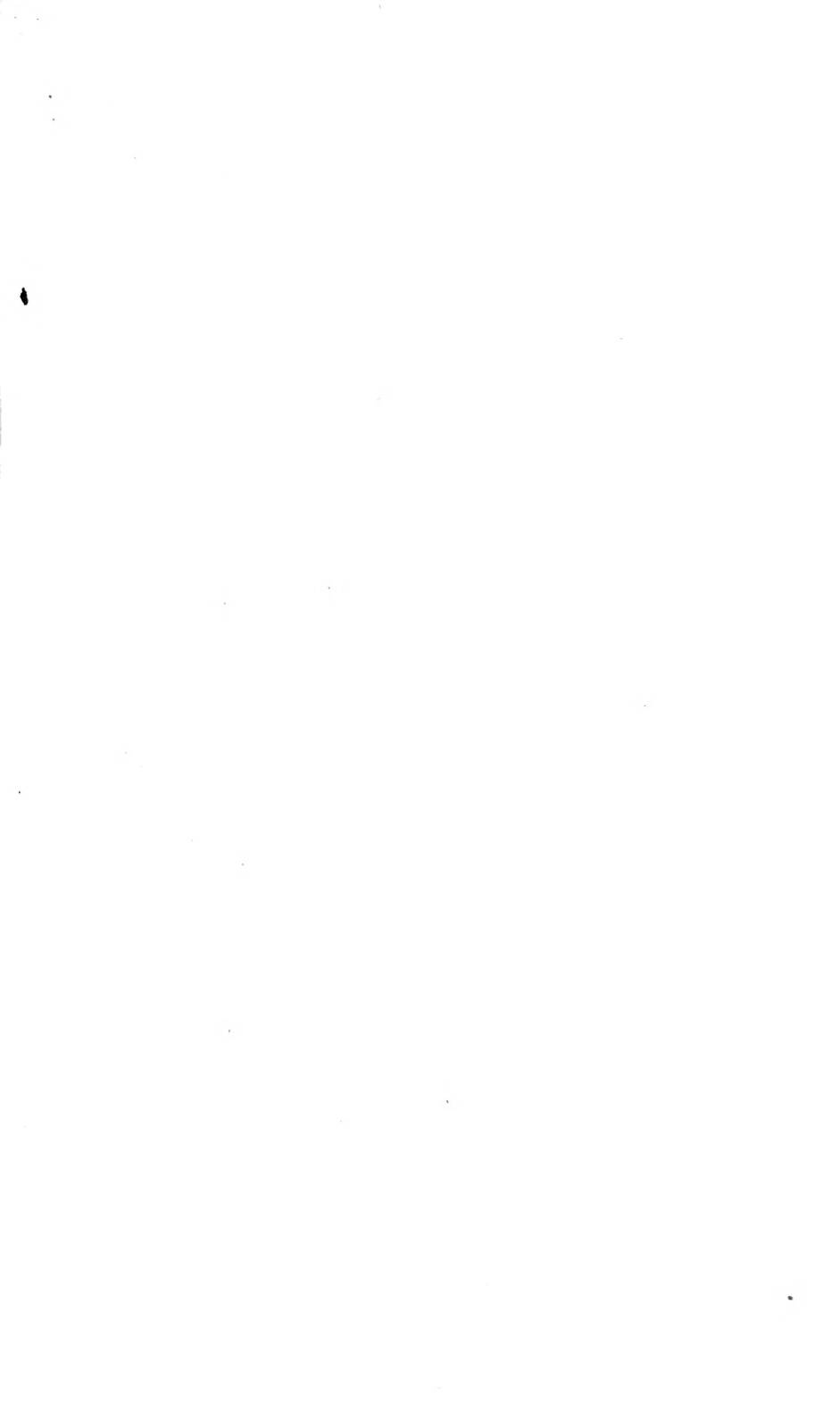
prayer of the best, since we were a nation. There are very many men, and very many women, who see through it all, and are consumed with impatience because our statesmen do not see through it too, and cut the Gordian knot with the sword. But we must be content to wait. The cause in which is the heart alike of God and of man, is a safe cause; and if God can wait as well as work, so may we. In the meantime, it is a great thing for us to know, and for the world to see, that this great nation is laboring through this great war, simply because there was in it an honest heart, which would not be false to the cause of man. We must labor through to the deliverance in the way that God leads us. Let us bear the burden with all consideration for the slow judgments, the fears, the errors, even the faults of one another. Meanwhile, let the world reproach us as well as praise us. It may not be best that they should exercise for us that forbearance which we ought to feel for one another. Let them show us our faults. Let them strike us wheresoever we are tender. It is fair that they should require that the nation which is to lead them all should be a perfect nation. It is a noble compliment which they pay us when they look to us for perfection. And if in any respect they fail of doing all that they can to make it perfect, I fear it is, that the natural favor of man for the cause of man, leads them to deal too kindly with us. We are grown to manhood; we do not need their flattery. But let them be true to search out our faults, and let us be true to correct them, and then they cannot but follow us; and as the nations shall come to see in us what a nation is, they will become like us, and will unite with us, in such form as the wisdom of the coming day shall be able to devise. And then the sun in all his circuit shall look down upon the United States of Humanity.

Then the world will begin to move. It seems a poor affair that we have been working these 6,000 years for mere liberty, and have not even secured that as yet. And what, after all, is liberty? It is only getting the fetters off, so that we can begin to live and to work. When all the world is free, every man's powers in condition and awake, we may expect mankind to make progress. Then we shall begin to see what government is. The word government means *pilotage*. Hitherto we have had rather *anchorage*; but when every ship of state is in trim, and every seaman in his place with hearty good will, there will be a fleet ready to sail on to realize the blessed destinies of humanity. What wealth, what greatness, what wisdom, will the united and developed intellectual and physical resources of mankind be able to discover and secure in the ages that are to come! God grant that as that fleet shall sail, the flag-ship may ever bear the glorious Stars and Stripes!









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